

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

- 5 A method and system is provided for enabling a service provider to limit service access to registered members of a group. The service provider encrypts data using an encryption key string and public data provided by the membership authority, and provides the encrypted data to a party wanting a particular service. To receive the service, the party must decrypt the encrypted data using a decryption key that has been obtained from a group membership
- 10 authority preferably subsequent to the encrypted data being received by the party. The membership authority provides the decryption key only if the party is a group member, the authority generating the decryption key using the encryption key string and private data used in deriving the public data.